

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 166912

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ORIGIN EA-09

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DRAFTED BY EA/PHL:ECHULEN:KA

APPROVED BY EA/PHL:BAFLECK

L - LPEZZULLO (SUBSTANCE)

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P 062009Z JUL 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY

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E O. 11652; N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SWEL, MGEN, RP

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATION VA HOSPITALIZATION

1. SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE IN ITS MARKUP OF VA APPROPRIATION BILL FOR 1977 CUT THE REQUESTED (AND HOUSE-APPROVED) \$2,100,000 FOR VA HOSPITALIZATION SUPPORT OF PHILIPPINE COMMONWEALTH ARMY VETERANS TO \$500,000. COMMITTEE ACTION WAS UNEXPECTED, AND URGENT LETTERS WERE SENT BY AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY ON JUNE 22 TO SENATORS PROXMIRE AND MATHIAS. THRUST OF LETTERS WAS THAT LIMITED BUDGETARY SAVINGS DID NOT JUSTIFY RISK OF ALIENATING OUR MOST COMMITTED FRIENDS IN PHILIPPINES, VETERANS WHO HAD FOUGHT WITH US AT PERIOD WHEN OUR NATIONAL FORTUNES SEEMED VERY LOW.

2. WE NOW HAVE RESPONSE FROM SENATOR PROXMIRE, CHAIRMAN, SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUD AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES. PROXMIRE LETTER REFERS TO COMMITTEE REPORT ON BILL (TRANSMITTED SEPARATELY) AS EXPLANATION OF SENATE CUT, DOES NOT, REPEAT NOT, HOLD OUT HOPE THAT \$1,600,000 CUT WILL BE

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PAGE 02 STATE 166912

RESTORED, BUT SAYS HE WOULD WELCOME ANY FURTHER COMMENTS

BY AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY.

3. WE WOULD LIKE TO GO BACK TO PROXMIRE, AND WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S SUGGESTIONS. OUR INITIAL LETTERS EMPHASIZED HUMANITARIAN AND HISTORIC REASONS AGAINST SLASHING PAST FUNDING LEVEL. FURTHER ARGUMENT MIGHT BE MOST EFFECTIVE IF DIRECTED AT EXPECTED EFFECT OF \$1,600,000 CUT IN OVERALL CONTEXT OF US/PHIL RELATIONS AT TIME WHEN OUR BILATERAL MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING RECAST.

4. CONGRESS IN RECESS UNTIL JULY 19, BUT COMMITTEE STAFF WILL BE WORKING DURING RECESS. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY REPLY BY OPENING OF BUSINESS JULY 9. ROBINSON

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